

*Tree branches will be reaching new heights in Sugar Land. Join us in protecting public safety and our valuable assets. This brochure gives Sugar Land property owners useful information about new requirements.*

#### **Sugar Land's Tree Trimming Requirements**

Changes to Sugar Land's tree trimming ordinance require residents to trim tree branches to certain heights.

Sugar Land City Council approved tree-trimming requirements in August 2005 that address public safety concerns in the City rights-of-way.

Call the Public Works Department with any questions or concerns at 281-275-2450.

#### **Hiring an Arborist**

It is best to hire a professional arborist:

- ☐ if limbs are large or can't safely be reached,
- ☐ if pruning involves using power equipment, and
- ☐ if pruning is needed near power lines.

When selecting an arborist, consider:

- ☐ membership in professional organizations such as the International Society of Arboriculture, National Arborist Association, or American Society of Consulting Arborists,
- ☐ certification through the ISA Certified Arborist program,
- ☐ proof of insurance, and
- ☐ a list of references.



City of Sugar Land  
Public Works Department  
P.O. Box 110  
Sugar Land, TX 77487-0110  
281-275-2450



**Tree Trimming  
Enhances Public  
Safety and  
Community Assets**

CITY OF SUGAR LAND



*Property owners are required to trim trees affecting public rights-of-way to the following guidelines:*

**Residential Tree-trimming Heights**



- Where the tree overhangs a residential street, there must be a clear space under the tree that is 12 feet above the street surface and 8 feet above the sidewalk surface.

**Nonresidential Tree-trimming Heights**



- Where the tree overhangs a nonresidential street, there must be a clear space under the tree that is 14 feet above the street surface and 8 feet above the sidewalk surface.

### **Why is it important to prune trees along City streets?**

First and foremost, a correctly pruned tree helps promote a safe environment. Pruning trees out of the City rights-of-way will help ensure that traffic safety devices, such as stop signs and traffic signals, are visible from roadways. The ordinance also will ensure that large vehicles — such as fire trucks, ambulances and garbage trucks — are able to safely navigate City streets. Overhanging tree limbs can

delay emergency vehicles when seconds make the difference between life and death.

In addition, a properly pruned tree protects a valuable asset from vehicular damage. Sugar Land's extensive and mature tree canopy in many parts of the City provides shade, significantly reduces energy bills and can increase a property's value by as much as 25 percent.

Trees should be trimmed with pruning shears, not garbage trucks that can cause irreversible damage to trees and trucks.

### **Compliance**

The ordinance was effective August 2005. After January 2007, the City will use the following enforcement process:

1. A letter of noncompliance is given to property owners stating that they have 30 days to correct the violation(s).
2. After 30 days, a re-inspection occurs.
3. If the resident does not comply, the violation is turned over to Code Enforcement for further action, which may include a municipal court citation.

Sugar Land is providing this grace period for residents to bring their trees into compliance. During this time, the City looks forward to working with residents to make sure everyone understands the ordinance, its purpose and requirements. Information continuously will be provided through Sugar Land's communication venues, such Sugar Land Today, SLtv 16, E-News and [www.sugarlandtx.gov](http://www.sugarlandtx.gov).

### **Disposal of Tree Limbs**

Sugar Land solid waste disposal requirements state that tree limbs placed for collection at the curb must be no longer than four (4) feet in length and have a diameter of four (4) inches or less. Tree stumps and logs will not be picked up.

### **Other Informational Resources**

Keep Sugar Land Beautiful (KSLB) periodically holds a Green Thumb Tree Care class. Contact the organization at 281-313-5752 or [info@kslb.org](mailto:info@kslb.org). Fort Bend County Libraries has numerous resources available to patrons.

### **Resources on the Web include:**

- Fort Bend Master Gardeners: [www.fbmg.com](http://www.fbmg.com)
- The National Arbor Day Foundation: [www.arborday.org/trees/nineThings.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/trees/nineThings.cfm)
- Texas A&M University: Visit [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/) to search on topics of interest. A search on tree pruning results in [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/pruning/pruning.html](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/pruning/pruning.html).

### **Pruning Trees**

Many property owners can safely trim lower branches. For large limbs and limbs that can't safely be reached, Sugar Land recommends hiring a professional arborist.

### **General Tree Pruning Tips**

- Use the proper tools and keep them clean and sharp.
- Remove the lowest branches that interfere with streets, sidewalks or routine maintenance such as mowing.
- Try to maintain a trunk without branches for the first 10 to 15 feet. Trim competing ones for greater control of the tree.
- Prune any broken or diseased branches.
- When making your final cut on a branch, cut on the outside edge of the branch collar so that the natural defense chemicals that protect the tree are not removed (see graphic.)
- Prune in late winter when trees are dormant. With spring growth following soon after, fresh wounds are exposed for the shortest time.
- Tree wound dressing is no longer recommended, except in April through June to prevent oak wilt infection.
- Remove any suckers growing at the base of the tree in the late summer.

